

Melanie Ann Pustay

Melanie Ann Pustay is the Director of the Office of Information Policy (OIP) of the Department of Justice. OIP has statutory responsibility for encouraging agency compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). OIP is responsible for issuing governmentwide FOIA policy across the Executive Branch and serves as the oversight office for agency FOIA compliance. OIP is also responsible for providing training, guidance, and counseling to agency personnel, as well as to the public, on all aspects of the FOIA.

As the Director of OIP, Ms. Pustay is responsible for developing policy guidance for agency personnel on all issues related to implementation of the FOIA, including guidance on President Obama's FOIA Memorandum and Attorney General Holder's FOIA Guidelines. She is the editor-in-chief of the Department of Justice Guide to the Freedom of Information Act, which is a comprehensive legal treatise addressing the FOIA that is published every two years. She oversees OIP's FOIA Counselor Service as well as OIP's extensive training program and regularly provides lectures on current issues pertaining to the FOIA. Ms. Pustay also provides advice to the litigating divisions of the Department of Justice in connection with FOIA cases that have become the subject of litigation, manages the Initial Request and Administrative Appeals staffs of OIP, and supervises the defense of FOIA litigation cases handled directly by OIP.

Before becoming Director, Ms. Pustay served for eight years as Deputy Director of OIP, where she was responsible for the Department's responses to access requests made to the Department's Senior Leadership Offices. Beginning in 2003 and continuing today, she has worked extensively with government officials in China, Argentina, and Chile, as well as with numerous other countries, and the Organization of American States, to assist those officials in implementing openness-in-government initiatives.

Ms. Pustay has extensive FOIA litigation experience and has argued cases before the District Court for the District of Columbia and the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, including handling a case involving access to former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's official and confidential files. She was responsible for the Department's senior leadership compliance with the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act, which required the federal government to make records of President Kennedy's assassination publicly available.

Ms. Pustay was given primary responsibility for drafting Executive Order 12,600, which established procedures to provide notice to businesses when their information is sought under the FOIA.

Ms. Pustay has received the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award for her role in providing legal advice, guidance, and assistance on records disclosure issues. She graduated from American University's Washington College of Law where she served on Law Review.